

FORSTON - Captain Thomas Edward Fortson USN (Ret.) 80, of Green Cove Springs, FL, died Sunday, March 23, 2003 at St. Vincents Hospital. A memorial service will be held at St. Margarets Episcopal Church Thursday, March 27th at 11:00 a.m. Burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. Capt. Fortson was born in Athens, GA, the son of late Rear Admiral Robert Malcolm Fortson, Sr. and Nellie Phinzy Fortson. He graduated from Robert E. Lee High School, Marian Military Institute, The United States Naval Academy 47, and The Air War College. As a naval officer for 29 years, naval assignments included the command of the guided missile destroyer USS Claude V. Ricketts in 1964-1965 during the NATO mixed manning demonstration with a crew of officers and enlisted personnel of the navies of seven countries. He was also the commanding officer of the support ship USS Sacramento during the Vietnam conflict. His last tour of active duty was head of the Fleet Modernization Program for Chief Naval Operations. Medals included two Legion of Merits and two Bronze Stars. After retiring from the US Navy, Capt. Fortson was a marine surveyor, a founding member, engineer, and chief of the Fleming Island Volunteer Fire Dept., and a 25 year member of St. Margarets Episcopal Church of Fleming Island. For the last 15 years, he actively worked with state, county, city officials and the Stewards of the St. Johns to institute a plan to restore the lower St. Johns river basin. Survivors include his wife Patricia Thomas Fortson of Green Cove Springs; his daughter, Patricia Fortson Harris of Gladstone NJ; his sons, Thomas Edward Fortson of Parkland, FL and Robert Carlton Fortson of Orange Park, FL; his son in law, William C. Harris; his daughters in laws, Francine Galante Fortson and Britta Fortson; one brother, Robert Malcolm Fortson, Jr.; four sisters, Anne Wright Freeman, Nellie Hull, Bolling Douglas, and Janet Beaty; and seven grandchildren. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Community Hospice of Northeast Florida, 4266 Sunbeam Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257 or the St. Margarets Building Fund, St. Margarets Episcopal Church, 6874 Old Church Rd., Green Cove Springs, FL 32043. HARDAGEGIDDENS FUNERAL HOME, 729 S. Edgewood Ave.